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UNCLAS QUITO 000720

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AORC](#) [PREL](#) [EC](#)

SUBJECT: FM ZUQUILANDA TO ATTEND OAS SPECIAL SESSION

REF: A. QUITO 506

[B](#). QUITO 364

[C](#). QUITO 280

[D](#). QUITO 121

[1](#). In a wide-ranging March 31 conversation with Ecuadorian Foreign Minister Patricio Zuquilanda (Septels), the Ambassador reiterated USG support for Paco Flores, the former El Salvadoran president and current OAS secretary general candidate. Understanding Ecuador had come out publicly in support of Chilean candidate Jose Miguel Insulza, she pressed Zuquilanda for second-round support of Flores, should the Chilean fail to advance.

[2](#). The FM claimed Ecuador remained firmly committed to Insulza. Only a South American candidate could understand GoE interests, Zuquilanda maintained; he did not reveal Ecuador's intentions should Insulza fall out. Zuquilanda personally would chair Ecuador's OAS delegation at the April 7 special session to elect the next secretary general.

[3](#). In a same-day conversation, MFA Multilateral Affairs Undersecretary Jose Piedrahita told PolCouns that Mexican candidate FM Luis Derbez was considering withdrawing from the OAS SYG race. Piedrahita's source, the GoE's envoy in Mexico, claimed that Derbez now believed his victory chances slim and would bow out in Washington. Under this scenario, Piedrahita continued, the elections could be delayed one month, allowing countries that backed the Mexican time to reconsider their votes; Caribbean votes would determine the outcome.

[4](#). COMMENT: Zuquilanda will travel to Washington days before the SYG vote and expressed interest in meeting the Secretary or other senior Department officials on the margins

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of the OAS session. We support the request, believing face time better than telephone diplomacy in swinging the Ecuadorians to our side. Such a meeting would allow us to promote Flores and lobby Zuquilanda hard for an Ecuadorian yes vote on the UNHRC Cuba resolution. If confirmed, we should also raise our concerns on Ecuadorian democracy, free trade, and other issues. END COMMENT.
KENNEY